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PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNH

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2310

INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 8809

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 3118

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2416

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 4832

RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1169

RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 3527

RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 5867

RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 7328

RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 4064

RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000861

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/J AND OES/OA - MHAYES/LPHELPS

STATE PASS CEQ

USDOC FOR NOAA/NMFS - CMCCARTY AND RWULFF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/2019

TAGS: SENV EFIS PREL IWC JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN'S WHALING FLEET RETURNS FROM ANTARCTIC

Classified By: Economic Minister Counselor Robert F. Cekuta reasons 1.4
b and d

¶11. (C) Japan's whaling fleet returned from its 2008/9 research whaling expedition in the Antarctic April 13 and 14. The fleet caught 679 minke whales and one fin whale, well below the projected catch of 850(plus/minus 10 percent) minke whales and 50 fin whales, according to a Fisheries Agency of Japan (FAJ) press release. Speaking to emboffs, the head of the FAJ's Whaling Group, Shigeki Takaya, confirmed press reports attributing the shortfall to the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's interference in the Japanese fleet's operations. He stated this is the third consecutive year the Sea Shepherd has kept Japan's research whaling fleet from reaching its quota. According to the FAJ press release, the Sea Shepherd's activities halted whaling for 16 of the 100 days Japan's whaling operations were underway. Regarding press reports that the price of whale meat in Japan may rise as a result of the decreased supplies, Takaya said he was not sure, but saw no possibility that the price will fall.

¶12. (C) The FAJ's press release also said the GOJ hopes to accelerate future research operations drawing on the results of this year's research whaling. When asked if this comment could mean Japan's research would end sooner or if the FAJ intended any specific changes to its research program, Takaya would not commit to any changes in the program. He said only that the data obtained from this year's hunt will be useful to Japan's research, but Institute for Cetacean Research scientists need to examine the data before they will know how it impacts their future plans.

ZUMWALT